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Endangered species? The Family Farm

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IMMEDIATELY

ENDANGERED SPECIES?
THE FAMILY FARM

MISSOULA--

Confronted with corporate expansion into agriculture, rising prices of land and equipment, and reduced political influence, the family farmer is increasingly forced to replace his traditional long-range planning with a short-term perspective.

A two-day conference in Lewistown March 27 and 28 designed to address issues threatening the future of the family farm will feature such speakers as A.B. Guthrie, Pulitzer Prize-winning novelist; Tom Wessell, Montana historian; and Hal Stearns, long-time Montana newspaperman and the director of the Montana Bicentennial celebration.

"Endangered Species? The Family Farm" is the title of the conference and series of small-group workshops to be held at the Eagles Lodge in Lewistown. The conference will provide a region-wide forum for farmers, legislators, farm organization officials and academic humanists to discuss these problems and formulate workable solutions.

The conference, which is the second of its kind, is jointly sponsored by the University of Montana Institute for Human Resources and the Social Sciences Department of Dawson Community College, Glendive. It is supported by a \$9,500 matching grant from the Montana Committee for the Humanities (MCH), the state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

According to project co-director Hugo J. Tureck of DCC, the framework of the conference is designed not as a lecture series to "talk at" those participating. Instead it will involve ranchers, farmers and small communities in an examination of the family farm in a broader context, not merely as an economic unit, but also as a viable social institution.

(over)

ENDANGERED SPECIES?--add one

"The question of the survival of the family farm is a question of values," Tureck says. "It is a question larger than economics only, involving historical, philosophical, political and social issues and values as well."

The conference will begin at 8 a.m. Thursday with registration and an introduction to the program by Dr. Duane Pettersen of the UM Department of Interpersonal Communication.

Wessell, who as a historian at Montana State University has been extensively involved in research on agricultural movements in Montana, will open the conference by posing the question, "Is the Family Farm an Endangered Species?"

Thursday's agenda includes a presentation by Stearns on "American Progress: Vanishing Small Towns and Vanishing Small Farms"; a panel presentation on the history and current status of the family farm by academic humanists from UM and MSU and Beryl Churchill, a farmwoman and National Newspaper Award-winning journalist from Powell, Wyo.; and small-group workshops focusing on the problems confronting the family farm and possible actions to save it.

Guthrie, author of "The Big Sky" and other novels, will be the speaker at a banquet scheduled for 7 p.m. at the Eagles Lodge. He will talk about human values and the future of the family farm. The cost of tickets for the banquet is \$5 per person.

The conference will open Friday at 8:30 a.m. with registration and coffee, followed by a presentation on "Government and the Family Farm in Montana, North Dakota and Saskatchewan," by Gordon McOmber, director of the Montana Department of Agriculture; Myron Just, North Dakota's commissioner of agriculture; and Gilbert "Gib" Wesson, chairman of the Saskatchewan Land Bank Commission.

The program includes a panel presentation by Sens. Harold Dover, R-Lewistown; Pete Story, R-Emmigrant; Tom Towe, D-Billings; and Rep. Vicki Hiatt, D-Columbus, on workable political solutions to issues facing the family farm. A question-and-answer session led by Howard Schwartz, program consultant for MCH, will follow.

(more)

ENDANGERED SPECIES?--add two

To open the afternoon program, Tom Ree of the DCC Department of Agriculture will offer his views as a farmer and rancher on the problems faced by the family farmer.

Pettersen will summarize the conference and discuss the guidelines for the workshops to follow, which will focus on "Issues and Alternatives." Ideas generated by these discussions will form the basis for a subsequent session on "Developing Strategies for the Future," involving all the participants.

Daniel J. Smith, co-director of the conference from the UM Institute for Human Resources, will summarize the results of the conference by presenting his views on the question, "Where Do We Go From Here?"

There is no charge for attendance, and registration for the conference and the banquet may be completed on the day of attendance. Pre-registration is requested and may be arranged by contacting Mrs. Hugo Tureck, c/o the Eagles Lodge, Lewistown, Mont. 59480.

Further information about the conference is available from Smith, c/o Institute for Human Resources, University of Montana, Missoula 59812 (243-6849), or Tureck, c/o Department of Social Sciences, Dawson Community College, Glendive, 59330 (365-3396).

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